

**A Participatory Review of the
Reunification, Reintegration, and
Youth Development Program of the
International Rescue Committee
in Rwanda**

*July 2001
John Williamson
Jill Donahue
Lynne Cripe*

The evaluation report was conducted under the auspices of the United States Agency for International Development. The evaluation was conducted by the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and War Victims Fund Contract (CRN-C-00-98-0037-00). The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or Professional Resources Group International, Inc.

Additional information or copies of this report can be obtained by contacting
The Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and War Victims Fund
North Tower, Suite 700
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 789-1500

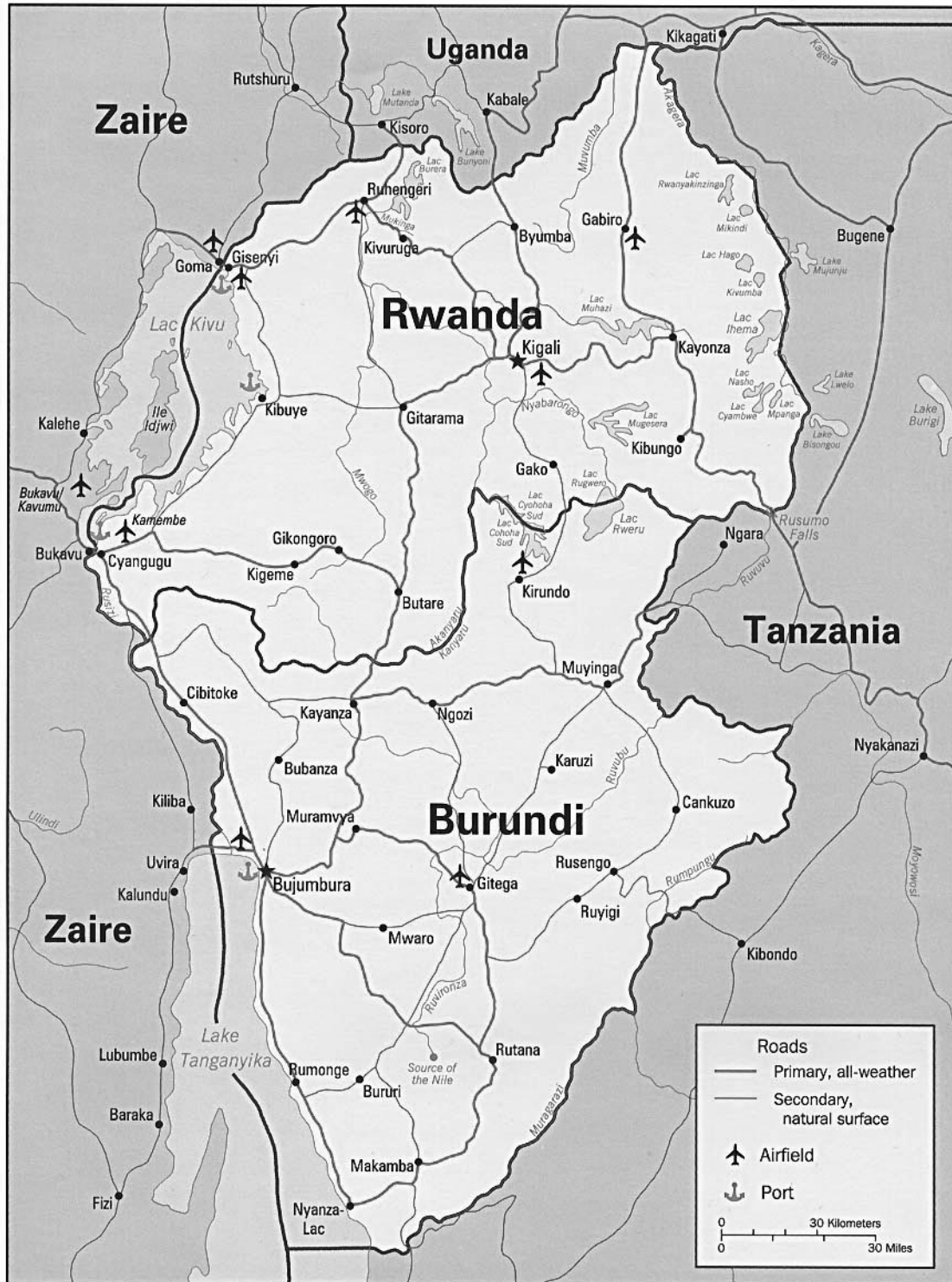
CONTENTS

Acronyms.....	v
Map.....	vii
Executive Summary.....	ix
Observations on the IRC Program.....	xi
Observations on Issues Relevant to Vulnerable Children.....	xii
The Rwandan Context.....	1
Highly Vulnerable Children and Adolescents.....	1
Economic Situation.....	6
The Displaced Children and Orphans Fund.....	7
Workshop.....	7
The IRC Program.....	9
Tracing, Family Reunification, and Community Reintegration Component.....	9
Participatory Youth Development Component.....	11
Observations on the IRC Program.....	11
Observations on Issues Relevant to Vulnerable Children.....	18
Recommendations.....	21
IRC Program—Reunification and Reintegration Component.....	21
IRC Program—Youth Component.....	23
IRC Staff Care.....	24
USAID.....	24
Appendix A—Scope of Work.....	27
Appendix B—Schedule.....	29
Appendix C—Contacts.....	31
Endnotes.....	35

ACRONYMS

ACDI/VOCA	Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers Overseas Cooperative Assistance
CHH	child-headed households
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DCOF	Displaced Children and Orphans Fund
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
GDP	gross domestic product
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
IMPACT	Implementing AIDS Prevention and Care Project
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Administration and Social Affairs
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PACT	Private Agencies Cooperating Together
UAC	Unaccompanied Children
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
YES	Youth Enterprise Services

Rwanda



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The genocide, population displacements, and armed conflict in Rwanda gave rise to unprecedented numbers of children separated from their families. By April 2001, some 3,700 children remained in 28 centers for separated children. The Ministry of Local Administration and Social Affairs (MINALOC) is responsible for monitoring these centers, but its capacity to do so is very limited, and it does not have a set of legal standards to use in assessing the adequacy of the care provided in these centers. Problems are beginning to emerge in these centers, particularly among young people in late adolescence. Often these young people do not fit in anywhere other than the institution because they have been isolated from the surrounding community. In addition to children in centers, other Rwandan children who are particularly vulnerable include street children, children in households headed by a child, children orphaned or otherwise affected by HIV/AIDS, and children whose parents are in prison.

Although some recent progress has been made, the Rwandan economy remains very weak, and opportunities for individuals and households are quite limited. Several organizations are engaged in activities to improve the economic situation of poor households. Of particular note in the microfinance industry are World Relief's affiliate URWEGO and Catholic Relief Services' ASSOFI schemes.

In June 2000, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) committed funds from the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) for the Youth Participatory Development Program and Unaccompanied Children: Reintegration and Reunification Program in Rwanda, with a completion date of March 22, 2003. The total budget for the program is US\$1,385,263.

In March 2001, DCOF sent a team of three technical advisors—John Williamson, Jill Donahue, and Lynne Cripe—to Rwanda to assess the IRC program for separated children and youth. From March 19 to 23, 2001, the DCOF advisors worked with the IRC team for the program to review with them program activities, approaches, and methods. Two members of the IRC team, joined by Tsegaye Chernet, co-director of Private Agencies Cooperating Together Ethiopia, participated in a national policy workshop on March 28–31, 2001, concerning the care and protection of orphans and other vulnerable children.

The program has two components: one seeks to reunify and reintegrate into families and communities children now living in residential centers, and the other promotes youth development. Because the youth program had only recently begun operating, the review focused primarily on

the reunification and reintegration component of the program. The goal of that component includes both finding durable solutions for children living in institutional care and working closely with the government and others to reduce the number of children living in centers and to prevent such placements. The first phase of this component focused on developing and reinforcing the program's approach, evaluating its field methodologies and tools, and building the staff's capacity. The recently begun second phase builds on that foundation; that phase focuses on influencing national policy and outlining concrete strategies for reducing the number of children in centers and preventing future placements.

Before receiving DCOF funding, IRC had demonstrated that children in centers could still benefit from innovative tracing and family reunification efforts. IRC was able to find solutions for all 140 children living in the Fred Rwigema Center in Rwamagana. With USAID/DCOF funding, IRC is now working in four centers and has been requested to expand to a fifth in July 2001.

IRC's strategy concentrates on the following:

- Exhaustive and personalized tracing for difficult-to-trace children using innovative techniques such as mobility maps and targeted radio announcements
- Assistance to children living in centers for socioeconomic reasons
- Support to adolescents and young adults through community-based independent-living programs
- Collaboration with other agencies to foster or find long-term solutions for children who cannot be traced
- Support for a successful transition from institutionalized care to family and community life
- Use of the lessons learned from the field to work with the government to find ways to close centers

IRC and its staff members base their work on the following principles: (1) children are best cared for in community and family environments, (2) IRC respects a community's social and cultural attributes, (3) communities are ultimately responsible for the welfare of children—not IRC, and (4) children have a right to participate in decisions that concern them.

Rwandan youth make up two-thirds of the population; yet formal structures and systems traditionally marginalize these young people. To help change this situation and to enable youth to participate in the reconstruction of the country, IRC and the Ministry of Youth, Culture, and Sports designed the youth component of the program. The program will assist youth groups in initiating and managing activities in four areas:

- Sports and culture
- Economic opportunities
- Conflict mediation
- HIV/AIDS

The first phase of the program is bringing together youth leaders to design action plans to promote sports and culture. The second phase will highlight economic opportunities for young people.

Observations on the IRC Program

IRC is demonstrating that finding family members of children previously considered not traceable is still possible. Although the direct beneficiaries of the IRC tracing activities are likely to number in the hundreds rather than the thousands, such activities should have great significance within Rwanda and beyond. The lessons IRC is learning must be captured and disseminated, and UNICEF, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, and the International Save the Children Alliance are key audiences.

A continuing challenge faced by IRC staff members is deciding how much time and effort to invest in an individual case. Time spent tracing and working for the reunification and reintegration of one child limits the time available for others. IRC staff members must develop and use some system for determining, first, on which types of needs they should concentrate their efforts and, second, how they can make good decisions about setting limits on such efforts. The project should actively seek partnerships with nongovernmental organizations and community structures capable of long-term follow-up and support to households that need ongoing support for economic strengthening.

An important by-product of IRC's tracing, reunification, and reintegration work for children in centers has been to show the varied reasons that children remain in centers. Economic pressures, rather than not knowing the whereabouts of family members, are a significant factor for many. Clearly, at a cost of about US\$540 (plus donated food) per child in institutional care per year, institutional placement is not a cost-effective way to alleviate poverty. The resources going to support such children in centers could be better used to increase the economic and social coping capacities of economically marginal households.

IRC's family willingness and suitability tool is helping staff members identify the likelihood of a child's successful reintegration within a household. Mobility mapping is proving to be a very useful tool for both tracing and assessing household economic potential. Program staff members are trying to think more strategically in their work, not only focusing on case-by-case results, but also looking at the impact their work can have on the larger situation in Rwanda. Churches are playing important roles in supporting the community integration of adolescents.

To enable tracing and family reunion in the centers, IRC needs to have working access to the centers. MINALOC must take strong action to ensure the cooperation of center directors and staff members.

Because poverty is a major factor pushing children into centers, IRC must address the economic challenges faced by the families that they seek to reunite with children. The economic strategy that IRC proposes is sound, with the first goal being to improve household economic capacity to meet the basic needs of reunited children. IRC recognizes that it has neither the resources nor the technical capacity to provide the long-term services poor communities may need to escape poverty. However, it can improve a household's social network within the community by linking it to neighbors, religious groups, local leaders, and government authorities. IRC can also help household members find their own solutions by providing advice on what type of activity best suits existing capabilities and resources and finally linking the household to organizations that have more permanent sources of financial services and business advice.

Some families can benefit from linkages to formal microenterprise programs. However, those whose situations are precarious may need a temporary boost to recover some assets and to bring them away from the verge of destitution or dissolution. IRC proposes to use a Trickle Up approach that provides very small grants in two increments (generally each is US\$50). Training is also offered to improve management capacity. IRC recognizes that its involvement with any one household is time limited. IRC staff members will link households to other programs from which they can receive assistance (such as microfinance, training, or agribusiness programs) so that IRC staff members can move on to work with other households.

The IRC poverty assessment tool is overly focused on physical assets and formal education. IRC needs a tool that will help it prioritize how it will offer assistance and how much time it will spend working with any one family. Given the limited staff time and institutional resources that IRC has on hand, staff members will have to be very clear about who truly needs assistance. Social assets and access to social networks are just as important as physical assets, sometimes more so. Savings clubs (*tontines*) are an important way to build trust and to generate local sources of capital.

IRC may be tempted to design generic training for the families it decides to assist. This temptation should be avoided at all costs. Because IRC's goal is to improve household income, training should be offered only if it would immediately and directly increase the income flowing into the household.

In choosing microcredit as the major tool by which it will assist youth in identifying economic opportunities, IRC has de facto limited youth options to one—self-employment. Microfinance is a tool that enables entrepreneurs to exploit opportunities that they have already identified or in which they are already engaged. It does not create opportunities. Young people who do not yet have the life skills that adults have or the direct exposure to potential self-employment options cannot take advantage of microcredit. In addition, most people do not choose self-employment; they would rather have a job.

Observations on Issues Relevant to Vulnerable Children

One of Rwanda's strengths, as it addresses the needs of vulnerable children, is the government's political will to move toward the "one child, one family" vision articulated by President Paul Kagame. Rwanda can learn from the successes and failures of other countries in the region. The recommendations of the workshop highlighted the need for the Rwandan government to adopt and implement a comprehensive set of policies concerning children who lack adequate family care. They also pointed to the need to strengthen the capacity of the government to implement such policies. Admissions procedures for centers are an important policy issue that must receive careful attention in Rwanda.

The resistance of some center directors and staff members is a major barrier to Rwanda's addressing appropriately and effectively the situation of children living in centers and helping them have an acceptable future as they reach adulthood. IRC cannot do much about this situation

unless MINALOC establishes a clear policy regarding family reunification and reintegration and enforces that policy.

Apparently, no effective mechanism exists to facilitate information exchange or collaboration among relevant organizations and ministries. Rwanda badly needs to develop among all key actors a shared understanding of the interrelated causes of child vulnerability, consensus about priorities for action, and agreement about respective roles and responsibilities. Participants in the March 28–31, 2001, workshop on orphans, separated children, and appropriate responses for care and protection recommended a collaborative situation analysis as a first step toward building this kind of consensus and cooperative effort. A joint assessment could help create a shared understanding of the situation of children in Rwanda, relevant capacities, priority concerns, and the most effective approaches for addressing both problems and opportunities. The findings of a collaborative situation analysis could provide a basis for stakeholders to plan how each can contribute toward and collaborate within a national plan to address the needs of the country's most vulnerable children.

In the design and implementation of all development programs in Rwanda, it is essential to temper assumptions that one might make about community solidarity in other contexts. Rwanda is a postgenocide society in which both survivors and perpetrators are living side by side. Approaches that have worked effectively in other countries in the region may not be appropriate in Rwanda.

The DCOF team's 25 recommendations are listed at the end of the report.

THE RWANDAN CONTEXT

Rwanda is one of the smallest countries in Africa and the most densely populated. The watershed of its history occurred in 1994, when the country's ethnic politics spawned a genocide during which at least 800,000 people were systematically killed. That horrific three-month period and the armed conflict and population displacements that it generated left many children orphaned or separated from their families.

The report on the 1996 visit to Rwanda of a team from the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) began with the following observation:

In the wake of genocide, Rwanda is a country where there are no “solutions” to be found. The most one can hope for are ways to improve the situation. Between 500,000 and one million people were brutally killed, the social fabric of the country was shredded and the faith of the people in the country's institutions was betrayed. There is a categorical difference between the aftermath of a genocide and the situations of armed conflict that international relief and rehabilitation bodies are accustomed to dealing with. Lessons learned following situations of armed conflict, if applicable to Rwanda at all, must be tested and used with extreme caution.¹

In the latter part of 1996, a mass return took place of Rwandans from Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Since that time, Rwanda has significantly improved its internal security. It has embarked on an ambitious program of decentralization and, for the first time in its history, has elected its local officials. National elections are scheduled for 2003.

Highly Vulnerable Children and Adolescents

The genocide, population displacements, and armed conflict in Rwanda gave rise to unprecedented numbers of children separated from their families, exceeding the usual 1 to 5 percent that typical civil conflicts generate.² In 1997, after the mass return, approximately 14,000 children were living in 86 children's centers in Rwanda. By April 2001, some 3,700 children remained in 28 centers. The Ministry of Local Administration and Social Affairs (MINALOC) is responsible for monitoring these centers, but its capacity to do so is very limited, and it does not have a set of legal standards to use in assessing the adequacy of the care provided in these centers.

As has been seen in other countries where institutional care has been used to provide long-term care for separated children and orphans, problems are beginning to emerge in Rwandan centers. Particularly in self-contained residential centers that isolate children from the community, serious problems typically begin to emerge among young people in late adolescence because they do not fit in anywhere other than the institution. Often they lack the basic living skills (e.g., cooking, washing clothes, tending animals, fetching firewood and water, minding younger siblings, organizing a business) that children learn as members of a household. Children in centers also may not have had opportunities to learn the basic social and cultural skills needed to function in local society.

Many children in centers have developed a sense of entitlement without having learned responsibilities, expecting to be taken care of, to have their needs provided for, and to go to school. Their self-identification is tied to the institution. Effectively, such children have become professional orphans. For example, in one center in Rwanda, the adolescent residents pulled out the electric sockets to emphasize that it was their center, created for them, and that they could do whatever they wanted to it.

Many separated Rwandan children remain outside of the country. Likely, many are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and some in Congo (Brazzaville), as well as in Europe. MINALOC has expressed strong interest in arranging for their return.

Approximately 110,000 people accused of participating in the genocide and awaiting adjudication are reported to be in prisons. Many of their children are in a situation comparable to that of separated children and orphans. Some are living in centers for separated children but are often afraid to admit that they have a surviving parent in prison.

A very large but unknown number of Rwandan children is living in situations of informal fostering. At some point these children found refuge with households and are generally assumed to be better off than children who remain separated; no systematic effort has been made to identify them, assess their well-being, or carry out tracing on their behalf. Likely, many are well taken care of and some are exploited and abused. The existence of too many other priorities has prevented this issue from being seriously addressed. However, foster children clearly are in a legal limbo and are at a disadvantage in relation to children in the extended family, who in principle have access to inheritance but whose conditions are also perceived as leading to exploitation.

An estimated 45,000 households in Rwanda are headed by children, and 90 percent of those households are headed by girls.³ No one knows the real number, but these estimates reflect the fact that the proportion of child-headed households is very high in Rwanda. The children in those households are particularly vulnerable in a postgenocide society where depending on one's neighbors can be a questionable strategy for survival.

Child welfare professionals and aid workers report an increase in the number of street children observed in the larger cities in Rwanda, particularly Kigali and Butare. Though figures are often based on incomplete or imprecise data, the best estimates suggest 9,000 street children exist in Rwanda. These children are a heterogeneous group with a variety of stories. Some are orphans and live on the street full-time. Some are not able to afford to go to school and so spend their days engaged in petty trade or other activities but return to their families at night. Others have

A Child-Headed Household

A visit to one child-headed household illustrates the challenges facing many of these families. Mukashaka is 20 years old and the eldest in a family of six. The family includes five siblings and the baby of one sister. Each member contributes to the survival and maintenance of the family. They take turns cooking the meals. Mukashaka's two younger brothers collect firewood and water; Mukashaka and one sister sell mandazi and samosas in the neighborhood and market while a second sister is responsible for washing and cleaning the house.

Those responsibilities, combined with lack of income, have meant that none of the children has completed more than three years of primary school. The children have a large plot of family land that they would like to cultivate or to sell or trade for a plot closer to their house, but an older man has taken over the land and has threatened the children. A local court has ruled in the children's favor, so they are hopeful that they might soon regain their rights to the land, but they will need money to file the necessary papers with the government.

Mukashaka and her sister had suffered from numerous illnesses and were afraid that they were HIV positive. Consequently, they were despondent and had difficulty having hope for the future. But recent tests indicated that they are HIV negative. A dramatic change has occurred in their disposition—they have more energy and optimism. According to this family, one of the greatest difficulties of being part of a child-headed household is not having anyone to give advice to or to comfort the children when they are in need.

left unsatisfactory home situations. A situation analysis of street children by a nongovernmental organization (NGO) suggests that 7–10 percent of children on the street are there because of a failed family reunification after the genocide and civil war.⁴ The aftermath of war, chronic poverty, and the increase of HIV/AIDS infections all contribute to the growing numbers of children who spend significant portions of their time on the street.

HIV/AIDS has been increasing the vulnerability of Rwanda's children since well before the genocide and armed conflict, although the epidemic's slow pattern of adult illness and death and orphaning has been overshadowed by the more dramatic events. Data in *Children on the Brink 2000* yield the following estimates and projections for Rwanda:

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Children whose mother or both parents have died of AIDS	36,321	70,924	129,404	200,705	257,304

Taking into account parental deaths from all causes, *Children on the Brink 2000* estimates that more than 30 percent of all Rwandan children have lost either or both parents. This figure is

higher than in any other country in the study, which included 34 countries (26 in sub-Saharan Africa) with high HIV prevalence.⁵

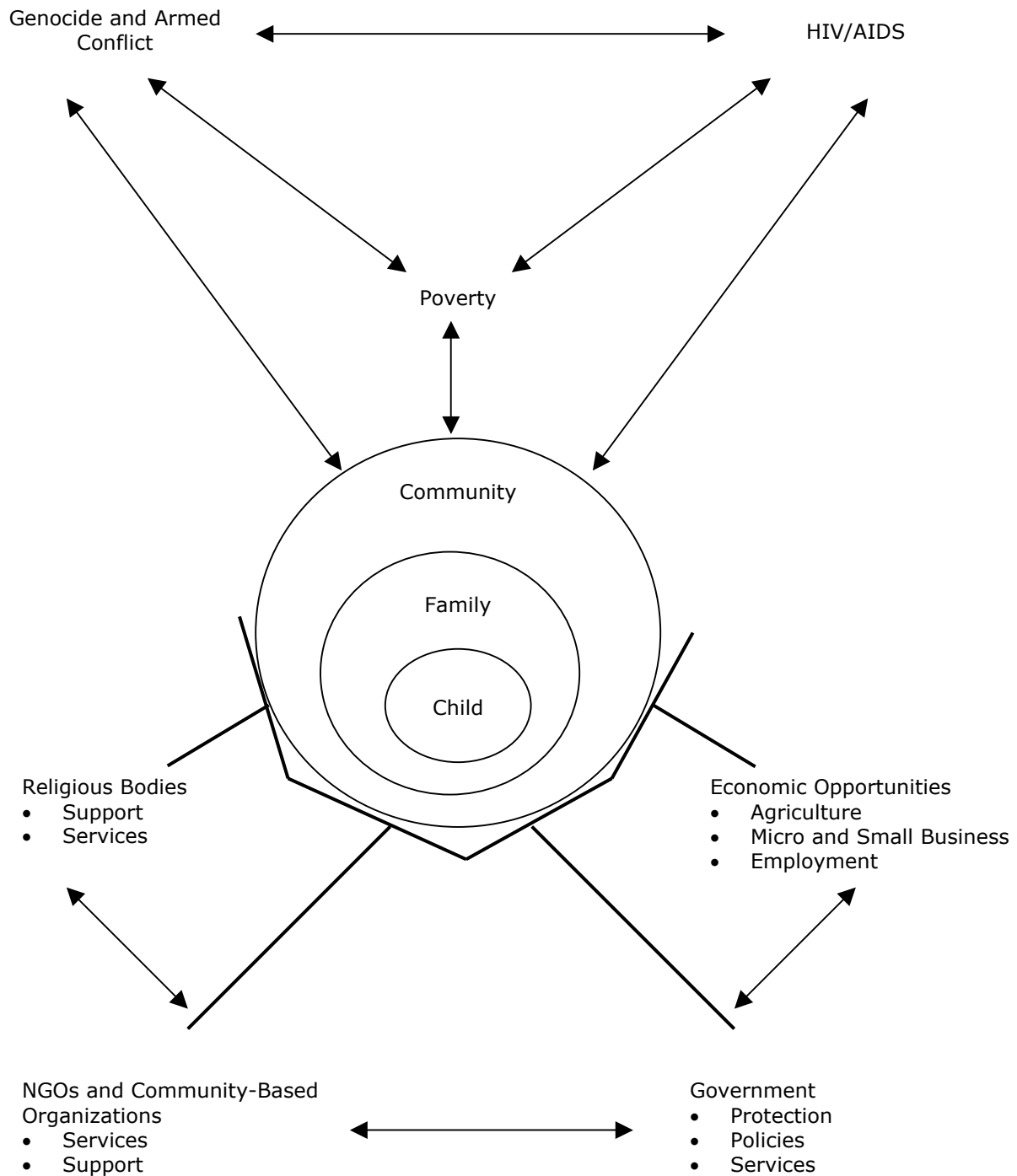
As a result of the genocide and civil war in 1994 and refugee movements in 1996, between 200,000 and 400,000 children were separated from their parents or caregivers. Although most of these children were absorbed into extended or foster families, not all children could be cared for in family-like arrangements. Before the genocide, in 1989, 29 orphanages in Rwanda cared for 3,224 children. The number of centers and the number of children in them skyrocketed after the war, in part because of the focus of the international community on unaccompanied minors. In 1995, more than 9,000 children were in over 70 centers, the quality of which varied widely. At the time of the visit, approximately 3,700 children lived in 28 registered centers. Efforts are currently focused on tracing and reuniting children with families or identifying foster families. However, the children who now reside in centers tend to be more difficult to reunite, either because they have long been separated from family or because they represent socioeconomic cases that may require intensive intervention. Donor priorities have also shifted now that the emergency in Rwanda has passed. Consequently, centers and NGOs are faced with challenging cases and diminishing resources.

The history of Rwanda means that national reconciliation and economic growth and development are inextricably linked. Consequently, decentralization is a cornerstone of Vision 2020, the long-term plan of action of the Rwandan government. Decentralization is seen as necessary for the rehabilitation and growth of social and institutional capital as well as for the development and implementation of policies and programs to achieve rapid economic growth and to reduce poverty. Further, many Rwandans and outside observers argue that a fundamental cause of the 1994 genocide was the hierarchical and highly structured sociopolitical system in place at the time. Therefore, if a future genocide is to be prevented, the sociopolitical system must be reformed.

Local elections held in March 1999, with a turnout of 95 percent, were a promising first step to participatory democracy at grassroots levels and the empowerment of local communities for a stronger role in the development of Rwanda. The government was reorganized in February 1999 to put appropriate emphasis on key development areas: land and resettlement, local government, decentralization, energy, natural resources, and the environment. In July 2000, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Commission was established to draft a new constitution for Rwanda as a prelude to national elections in 2003. Commune-level elections were held in April 2001. An adaptation of a traditional method of dispute resolution—*gacaca*—designed to assist with and expedite the adjudication of lower-level genocide cases is expected to be fully operational before the end of 2001.

The anticipated demobilization of Rwandan forces from the DRC has economic and social implications for the country. In response to a resolution by the United Nations Security Council earlier this year, countries with forces in the DRC—including Rwanda—agreed to pull back from the frontlines and ultimately to withdraw completely from the country. Although original deadlines for the pullback and withdrawal have not been met, a large demobilization effort is expected at some point. Estimates of the number of Rwandan soldiers in the DRC vary widely, from 10,000 to 12,000 on the low end to as many as 50,000. The demobilization may stretch the economic and social resources of already fragile communities as soldiers seek to assume a civilian identity, find gainful employment, and reintegrate into families and communities.

Figure 1. Child Vulnerability in Rwanda: Protective, Contributing, and Mitigating Factors



Economic Situation⁶

In the past few years, Rwanda has made concrete progress in restoring internal security and in rebuilding economic and social infrastructure. Statistically, the economy has recovered to prewar and pre-genocide levels. Nonetheless, the daunting task of achieving sustainable development still remains. More than 65 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. The gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate slowed to 5.2 percent in 2000, below the projected 8 percent necessary to reduce poverty levels.

More than 90 percent of Rwanda's people depend on subsistence agriculture. In 1996, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) reported that farm size was 0.83 hectares per household and getting smaller with growing rural population.⁷ Internal security has improved agricultural yields in the more fertile northwestern region, but in mid-2000, such improvement did not help avert a critical food security situation in the eastern and south-central areas, which experienced the worst drought since 1954. Rwanda does not have a competitive industrial base, and its major exports of coffee and tea have not completely recovered.

Several organizations are engaged in activities to improve the economic situation of poor households in Rwanda. A handful of microfinance institutions⁸ and some agricultural development initiatives are active. Of particular note in the microfinance industry are World Relief's affiliate URWEGO and Catholic Relief Services' (CRS's) ASSOFI schemes. The lingering "relief mentality" and dependence on handouts evident in many communities threaten the evolution of the Rwandan microfinance industry. Most organizations also suffer from these attitudes, feeling that loans should be subsidized and repayments not enforced. This mentality undermines the long-term sustainability and self-help attitude that Rwanda requires to move out of poverty. Lending programs that are ambivalent about repayment and adhering to the industry's best practices eventually crumble and undermine other microfinance programs. They do a grave disservice to clients who genuinely want microfinance services to be available in Rwanda on a permanent basis.

USAID supports URWEGO and ASSOFI, among other microfinance initiatives. The mission also has a substantial agribusiness development services component, which is largely aimed at creating linkages between Rwanda's farming sector and profitable markets. Chemonics manages the largest part of the mission's economic portfolio. It will establish several agribusiness centers throughout Rwanda to promote linkages for markets interested in coffee, tea, horticulture, and Irish potatoes. Another significant actor is Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA), which auctions donated commodity cooking oil to local entrepreneurs in a closed-bid process. To promote fair competition,

ASSOFI

ASSOFI is a village banking program in Rwanda operated by CRS. It has about 4,000 clients. Members are organized into groups of five or six people and 30 to 40 groups form a "bank." ASSOFI has about 100 banks. The program's repayment rate for current loans is 100 percent, but 10 percent of total loans are more than 30 days past due and are at risk of being written off. CRS plans to expand its program to reach 32,000 clients within five years.

ACDI/VOCA conducts a short training session before each closed bid. The resulting sales profits are invested in other development projects in agriculture-related activities such as association building, rehabilitating farm-to-market infrastructure (including roads), and linking coffee growers and staple food crop producers to profitable markets.

The Displaced Children and Orphans Fund

Established in 1989 by an act of the U.S. Congress, the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund is administered by USAID's Office of Health and Nutrition. The fund has evolved into a program that focuses on issues of loss and displacement among three groups of children in the developing world: children affected by armed conflict, street children, and children orphaned and otherwise made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

In June 2000, USAID committed DCOF monies to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) for the Youth Participatory Development Program and Unaccompanied Children: Reintegration and Reunification Program in Rwanda, with a completion date of March 22, 2003. The total budget for the program is US\$1,385,263.

In March 2001, DCOF sent a team of three technical advisors—John Williamson, Jill Donahue, and Lynne Cripe—to Rwanda to assess the IRC program for separated children and for youth. From March 19 to 23, the DCOF advisors worked with the IRC team for the program to review with them program activities, approaches, and methods. Of the five days spent on the assessment of the program, four were spent with a focus on the reunification and reintegration component and one on the youth program. This allocation of time reflected, in part, both the former's state of advanced implementation and the joint priorities of DCOF and IRC. The scope of work for the DCOF team is included in Appendix A.

Workshop

Following the assessment of the IRC program, Ms. Donahue and Mr. Williamson remained in the country and participated in a national policy workshop, held March 28–31, concerning the care and protection of orphans and other vulnerable children in the country. The workshop was organized by MINALOC and IRC. DCOF also facilitated the participation in this workshop of Tsegaye Chernet, co-director of the Ethiopian program of Private Agencies Cooperating Together (PACT). This workshop and the strategic plan of action that participants developed are described in the report "Future Thinking: Issues Related to Orphans and Vulnerable Children and Appropriate Responses for Care and Protection" and will not be repeated here, but this DCOF report does include recommendations that stem from the workshop.

THE IRC PROGRAM

Tracing, Family Reunification, and Community Reintegration Component

The goal of this program component includes both finding durable solutions for children living in institutional care and working closely with the government and others to reduce the number of children living in centers and to prevent such placements. The first phase focused on reinforcing the program's approach, evaluating its field methodologies and tools, and building the staff's capacity. The recently begun second phase builds on that foundation; that phase focuses on influencing national policy and outlining concrete strategies for reducing the number of children in centers and preventing future placements. In addition, program staff members will adapt the methodology they have developed (e.g., mobility maps and community roundtable discussions) for use by agencies working with street children, child-headed households, and other groups of vulnerable children.

Significant numbers of Rwandan children still live in institutional care. Much of the attention focused on tracing and reuniting children with family members dwindled as results declined.⁹ However, IRC's experience in the Fred Rwigema Center in Rwamagana demonstrated that children who were once considered untraceable can still benefit from innovative tracing efforts. IRC was able to find solutions for all 140 children living in the center. Through tracing, 67 children were reunited with family members, 26 children who had been living in the center for socioeconomic reasons were reintegrated into their families, 33 children were placed in foster care, and 14 adolescents were assisted in starting to live independently in the community. MINALOC officially closed the center in August 1999.

The proposal to USAID/DCOF called for work in three additional centers; however, because center staff were unwilling to cooperate with tracing, reunification, and reintegration efforts, work proved to be possible in only one of the three centers. As a consequence, five additional centers were targeted. In one of those additional centers, IRC had to suspend activities because of ongoing staff resistance. The program is now working in four centers and has been requested to expand to a fifth in July 2001.

IRC's strategy concentrates on the following:

- Exhaustive and personalized tracing for difficult-to-trace children using innovative techniques such as mobility maps and targeted radio announcements

- Assistance to children living in centers for socioeconomic reasons
- Support to adolescents and young adults through community-based independent-living programs
- Collaboration with other agencies to foster or find long-term solutions for children who cannot be traced
- Support for a successful transition from institutionalized care to family and community life
- Use of the lessons learned from the field to work with the government to find ways to close centers

IRC and its staff members base their work on the following principles: (1) children are best cared for in community and family environments, (2) IRC respects a community's social and cultural attributes, (3) communities are ultimately responsible for the welfare of children—not IRC, and (4) children have a right to participate in decisions that concern them.

Because poverty is a major barrier to reunification and a contributing factor to many children's having initially gone to centers, IRC staff must assess the socioeconomic situation of households and, as appropriate, help them increase their capacity to provide for children who are now in centers. Table 1 illustrates how IRC categorizes families and matches them to appropriate services.

Table 1. Socioeconomic Categories of Families

	Category Indicators	Services Provided
Poor Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has some material resources and assets • Is already engaged in economic activity • Can satisfy part of children's needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to credit sources • Refer to market linkages programs • Refer to training
Very Poor Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has limited resources and assets • Has little to no business experience • Cannot satisfy children's needs adequately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Trickle Up grant and training for economic activity • Improve social network within community
Destitute Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has no resources and assets • Has no productive capacity • Has no business experience • May not survive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Trickle Up grant if some productive capacity exists • Provide specialized intervention for each case • Link to community resources

Differences among the Centers

IRC has found that the profiles of the children are different in each center where it is working. For example, of the 27 children in the Rulindo Center, 14 are there for socioeconomic reasons; tracing has been successful for 4 children, who are waiting for verification of relationships; and not enough information exists to conduct active tracing for 9 children. (The profiles in Table 2 are for children in the Rulindo Center.)

The profiles in other centers, however, are more mixed and include separated children who are in need of tracing and children whose reunification has been blocked by household economic constraints. More than 90 percent of the 48 children who remain in the Kibuye Center are genocide survivors, and more than 20 of those children returned to the center after a reunification previously arranged by another agency had failed.

Participatory Youth Development Component

The 1994 genocide left deep marks on Rwanda's citizenry. The scars of mistrust and despair pose a particular threat to the future of Rwandan youth, who make up almost one-fifth of the country's population; yet formal structures and systems traditionally marginalize the young people, who will become the future leaders of Rwandan society.¹⁰ The Rwandan government recognizes that it must actively encourage youth to engage in national efforts to reconstruct the country. Most importantly, young people must be able to set a new reconciliatory tone of nondiscrimination and inclusion.

To help them do so, IRC and the Ministry of Youth, Culture, and Sports designed the Participatory Youth Development component of the program. IRC plans to assist youth groups in initiating and managing activities in four areas:

- Sports and culture
- Economic opportunities
- Conflict mediation
- HIV/AIDS

The first phase of the program is bringing together youth leaders to design action plans to promote sports and culture. The second phase will highlight economic opportunities for young people.

Observations on the IRC Program

Tracing, Reunification, and Reintegration

IRC is demonstrating that finding family members of children previously considered not traceable is still possible. Although the direct beneficiaries of the IRC tracing activities are likely to

Table 2. Rulindo Center Profiles

Child	Family Situation	Reason for Being in Center
2-year-old girl, came to the center when she was 1½ years old	Father is a very young single farmer, whose wife died in childbirth. His cousin was with him at the focus group. He visits every couple of weeks.	Child was at home but came to the center when she became malnourished. Father also wants her at the center to get some education.
1½-year-old girl, arrived at the center last year	Single father, a farmer, has two brothers and one sister living nearby, each with his or her own family.	Bourgmeister gave father authorization to bring the girl to the center. Father said that he could not watch child during the day while he worked, and he did not have enough food or money to send her to school.
6-year-old boy, has been at the center from birth	Parent is a young single mother who was raped. She is an orphan herself and was staying at a convent when she discovered she was pregnant. The nuns told her she could stay at the convent, but the child had to stay at the center. She visits her son three times a month.	Mother would leave the convent and take her son with her immediately if she had the means. She has no family to help her out and does not want to go back to her original community. She now works for the nuns at the convent but does not make enough money to live on her own. She has no connections to new employment.
17-year-old girl, arrived at the center in 1997	Parent is an older man, a farmer.	Child is a landmine victim. She is at the center to receive medical care and education.
4-year-old girl, arrived at the center when she was 2½ years old	Brother is a casual laborer at a tea plantation and a farmer. That young man is caring for five more brothers and sisters. His parents were killed during the genocide. A young woman, a nurse, is a cousin to the girl and the young man. The cousin's parents were also killed during the genocide.	Young man feels that his sister should be with him, but because he ran out of support, she became malnourished and his cousin brought her to the center. The cousin is now against his efforts to bring the girl home. The cousin says that the girl's brother cannot meet the education and food needs of the girl.
Young girl	Mother died in childbirth. An older woman, the aunt of the girl's mother, maintains connections with the girl. The child's grandmother, the aunt's sister, is also living.	Child came to the center immediately after her mother died. A dispute exists between the aunt and grandmother. The aunt says her sister does not want the child, but staff members at the center say that, in reality, the aunt wants the child for herself because she has no children of her own.

number in the hundreds rather than the thousands, such activities should have great significance within Rwanda and beyond. Rwanda is a country trying to heal itself and move into a more constructive future. The successes being achieved with tracing and family reunification are signs of hope and healing; that tracing and reunification receive both targeted and general public attention within the country is important. To fulfill its family tracing and reunification goals in the centers, IRC needs to have working access to the centers, which will require strong action on the part of MINALOC to ensure the cooperation of center directors and staff members. Also, the success with tracing that IRC is demonstrating up to seven years after many children were separated has implications far beyond Rwanda. The lessons IRC is learning must be captured and disseminated, and UNICEF, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, and the International Save the Children Alliance are key audiences.

A continuing challenge faced by IRC staff members is deciding how much time and effort to invest on an individual case. Time spent tracing and working for the reunification and reintegration of one child limits the time available for others. IRC staff members must develop and use some system for determining, first, on which types of needs they should concentrate their efforts and, second, how they can make good decisions about setting limits on such efforts.

Considerations in Setting Priorities

Remember the rule of the tool: Give a small boy a hammer, and suddenly he will find that everything needs pounding. For every job, it is essential to select the right tool and the right artisan.

The IRC tracing staff members must assess carefully their own capacities and limitations in relation to the challenges of tracing, reunification, and reintegration and develop guidelines for their work that help ensure that they apply their tools, skills, and capacities appropriately. These guidelines need to reflect the limited extent to which IRC's tracing staff members are going to be able to ensure ongoing economic reintegration of children within communities. The project should actively seek partnerships with NGOs and community structures capable of long-term follow-up and support to such households. One result of IRC's clarifying for itself the limits of its tools and capacities should be to clarify which issues it should advocate rather than implement.

An important by-product of IRC's tracing, reunification, and reintegration work for children in centers has been to show more clearly to MINALOC and others concerned with the children in centers the varied reasons that they remain there. Economic pressures, rather than not knowing the whereabouts of family members, are a significant factor for many children. Clearly, at a cost of about US\$540 (plus donated food) per child in institutional care per year, institutional placement is not a cost-effective way to alleviate poverty. The resources going to support such children in centers could be better used to increase the economic and social coping capacities of economically marginal households.

The tracing program has been counting and reporting on only successful reunifications and reintegrations. The DCOF team encouraged tracing staff members also to report on the number of children for whom tracing had been successful in identifying a living family member, even if reunification did not prove possible. Even if a child remains in a center, reestablishing contact with an extended family member can be an important advantage for the child because it links the child

to an external network of relationships. Such contacts not only are valuable emotionally to a child, but also may be significant as the child grows up and integrates into a community.

Tools

IRC has innovative tools to help prioritize the families on which it will focus most of its efforts. One of the tools is the mobility map, which demonstrates the social network of individuals in the household. For example, maps that the team reviewed revealed that one adult was a member of an economic-related association. The map also provided information on material assets such as land, livestock, and shelter. Mobility mapping can be adapted for use in both tracing and socioeconomic assessment. Staff members ask children, their caregivers, or both to draw the places where they go and to indicate how frequently they go to those places and whether they like going there. Such mobility maps replaced the socioeconomic assessment form, which did not produce good results. The original tool, which asked a series of questions about household income and assets, not only failed to produce accurate information, but also tended to create expectations on the part of the household members that the poorer they appeared to be, the more support they were likely to receive from the project.

Another tool is the poverty assessment exercise. It outlines the economic circumstances of the household and provides a point system based on household assets, skills, and standard of living. The point system allows IRC staff members to determine whether a household is poor, very poor, or destitute, and it also allows for a more precise (and therefore more effective) match between economic circumstances and appropriate interventions.

Wealth ranking is another tool that might be adapted to refine assessment of a household's economic coping capacity. An estimated 7 to 10 percent of children on the street are there because of failed reunifications. A strength of the project is that staff members are being trained to see children and households in context, not in relation to standard criteria or categories. Operationally, staff members are using a combination of casework and community work approaches and skills.

IRC's family willingness and suitability tool is helping staff identify the likelihood of a child's successful reintegration within a household. The tool should assist with priority setting and

Using a Mobility Map to Assess Economic Capacities

Miriam is the older sister of Mohammed, age 13. Mohammed was reunited with Miriam in December 2000. In this socioeconomic case, IRC is trying to identify what kind of assistance the family most needs to support and nurture the reunification. IRC caseworkers used the mobility map to identify the family's socioeconomic networks. Two important pieces of information emerged from the exercise—information that was new to the caseworkers despite lengthy contact with the family. First, the family owns a large plot of land (32 hectares) outside Kigali that squatters have occupied. Miriam has all the necessary paperwork to prove ownership. Second, the map revealed that the family has a close network of good jobs and resources (e.g., baker, butcher, water seller). This factor suggests that the family has a number of people to rely on if things become difficult.

reduce future placement breakdowns after reunification by helping staff assess at the outset prospects for success. IRC has found that churches also can play important partnership roles in supporting the community integration of adolescents, as is being demonstrated in Rwamagana.

Program staff members are trying to think more strategically in their work, focusing not only on case-by-case results, but also on the effect it can have on the larger situation in Rwanda. A practical lesson that they have learned is the importance of taking into account both school terms and agricultural cycles when arranging the timing of reunifications.

IRC's Poverty Alleviation Strategy

Traditionally in Rwanda, it was a point of honor for family, community, and society to take collective responsibility for children when one or both of their parents died. But the civil war, drought, and—most significantly—the genocide flipped this reality on its head. Now families more commonly talk about how children are better off in institutions, taken care of by strangers. The way a poor family sees it, a child is fed, schooled, and looked after in a center. These things would not automatically happen in the child's own household, let alone in the community. Rwandans are also still grappling with what it means to be a society in the aftermath of a brutal genocide.

Although IRC has proven that many unaccompanied children can be

A Map and Bananas

One young boy sans adresse was considered untraceable because he could not help the center's staff determine where he might be from. IRC staff worked with him on his "mobility map." It turned out that he went often to his neighbor's house because she would give him bananas—and he loved bananas! Luckily, he also remembered the first name of his neighbor. IRC prepared a radio announcement with this unusual information, and a relative recognized the neighbor's name and remembered how his nephew loved bananas. The relative went to the center on the chance that the boy might be his relative—it was, and they were reunited!

Using the Poverty Assessment Tool: Case 1

One of the IRC team's initial applications of its new poverty assessment tool was with a household including a middle-aged woman caring for five children and her elderly mother. Her teenage nephew had been reunited with the family by IRC. Theirs was considered a socioeconomic case. The nephew wanted to learn welding and was an apprentice to a welder, but the welder was demanding that the nephew pay him for the training.

The boy's aunt asked whether IRC could help her find a solution because she feared her nephew would leave if he did not have something to occupy him. The poverty assessment tool told the team that this family was indeed very poor. However, when asking about the family's social resources, the team discovered that the aunt was actually the head of her *nyumbakumi*—in other words, she was a respected member of the community. This finding indicated that the family, although poor, was not without resources. Obviously, determining poverty based purely on the physical resources available would miss capturing valuable insight into the social resources available to particularly vulnerable households.

reunited with family members through innovative tracing methods, more children are in the wings, poised to refill the centers because their caretakers perceive the centers to be a solution to poverty. IRC views this perception as a serious challenge to reducing the number of children in centers. In fact, approximately 70 percent of IRC's caseload now appears to be children in centers for economic reasons. IRC also believes that merely aiming to reunite children with families is window dressing. The commitment is to go beyond reunification to reintegrate children in their communities. Only in this way can IRC ensure that it is on morally solid ground—children not only must be reunited, but also must stay in their communities. In light of this conviction, IRC cannot ignore the need for activities that would help alleviate poverty.

Nonetheless, IRC is an organization primarily focused on relief. Although it has begun to address postconflict reconstruction issues in recent years, it is not yet a development NGO. Poverty alleviation is most decidedly a development issue, generally in the domain of microenterprise specialists. The IRC Rwanda program does not intend to turn staff members into microenterprise specialists. Thus, the challenge for IRC becomes attending to the economic needs of families and communities without compromising its institutional identity and the focus on reintegrating children.

The strategy that IRC proposes is sound. First, the goal is to improve a household's economic capacity so it can meet the basic needs of reunified children. IRC's role emphasizes laying a foundation so that a better likelihood exists that a reunified child will stay with the family. IRC recognizes that it has neither the resources nor the technical capacity to provide the long-term services poor communities may need to escape poverty. However, it can improve a household's social network within the community by linking it to neighbors, religious groups, local leaders, and government authorities. IRC can also improve a household's economic circumstances by helping its members find their own solutions, providing

Using the Poverty Assessment Tool: Case 2

A second case in which the IRC team used its new poverty assessment tool involved a woman who had already participated in a mobility map exercise. Two children of her extended family had recently rejoined her household. They had been in a nearby center because she did not have a decent house.

However, the local authorities had given her a plot of land, and she had managed to build a house with donations and help from others. She had asked IRC if it could help with school fees for the two children now under her care. On the basis of the mobility map, the team knew she belonged to a solidarity lending group that obtained small loans from Duterimbere, a women's entrepreneurship program. In addition, she kept goats at a nearby convent.

This information enriched the poverty assessment tool and allowed IRC to determine that the woman, although illiterate, was adept at keeping track of her business and knew what resources she had at hand. Without the mobility map and the assessment tool, the team probably would have labeled her as in need of substantial assistance. Instead, the team was able to direct her to the local authorities to apply for a school fee waiver. IRC could now spend its resources on a more needy household.

advice on what type of activity best suits existing capabilities and resources and finally linking the household to organizations that have more permanent sources of financial services and business advice.

Some families can benefit from linkages to formal microenterprise programs. However, those whose situations are precarious may need a temporary boost to recover some assets and to bring them away from the verge of destitution or dissolution. Such support may enable them to benefit from linkages to the more formal programs. With this reality in mind, IRC proposes to use the Trickle Up approach that provides very small grants in two increments (generally each is US\$50). Training is also offered to improve management capacity. A participant must develop a proposal with an acceptable business plan to receive the first grant increment, and then must reach goals he or she helps set before the second increment is delivered.

IRC also recognizes that its involvement with any one household is time limited. IRC staff members will link households to other programs from which they can receive assistance (such as microfinance, training, or agribusiness programs) so that IRC staff members can move on to work with other households. IRC will have to be very careful when faced with improving the economic situation of a destitute household. This type of situation is likely to take the most time and resources to resolve. Spending time on these cases means that IRC cannot spend time on other households that may present more easily resolved situations. Such decisions require careful attention, and the staff members concerned need guidelines to use as they consider such choices.

The IRC poverty assessment tool is overly focused on physical assets and formal education. IRC needs a tool that will help it prioritize how it will offer assistance and how much time it will spend working with any one family. Given the limited staff time and institutional resources that IRC has on hand, staff members will have to be very clear about who truly needs assistance. Social assets and access to social networks are just as important as physical ones, sometimes more so.

Microfinance is only one economic strengthening tool. Looking for ways that people can expand their options is also important, and for that, building community cohesion is important. For example, savings clubs (*tontines*) are an important way to build trust and to generate local sources of capital. They can also be sources of advice for less-experienced or less-capable entrepreneurs. Linking families to better markets is also very important. In farming communities, such goals are often accomplished by forming associations so that individuals can pool their produce to bring to market or can make bulk purchases of raw materials more cheaply.

IRC may be tempted to design generic training for the families it decides to assist. This temptation should be avoided at all costs. Because IRC's goal is to improve household income, training should be offered only if it would immediately and directly increase the income flowing into the household.

Many Rwandan organizations appear not to be concerned with following what the microfinance industry considers to be sound practices. Lending programs that are ambivalent about repayment and adhering to the industry's "best practices" eventually crumble and undermine other microfinance programs. Such programs do a grave disservice to clients who genuinely want microfinance service to be a permanent part of Rwanda's institutional landscape.

In choosing microcredit as the major tool by which it will assist youth in identifying economic opportunities, IRC has de facto limited youth options to one—self-employment. Microfinance is a tool that enables entrepreneurs to exploit opportunities that they have already identified or in which they are already engaged. It does not create opportunities. Young people who do not yet have the life skills that adults have or the direct exposure to potential self-employment options cannot take advantage of microcredit. In addition, most people do not choose self-employment; they would rather have a job.

Observations on Issues Relevant to Vulnerable Children

Policy Issues

During the national workshop on care and protection of orphans and separated children, participants did a “force field analysis” exercise in which they described past, current, and desired future care for those living in centers. Then they identified both opportunities and constraints to achieving appropriate care arrangements in the future. Strong consensus existed that a prime strength of Rwanda is the government’s political will to move toward the “one child, one family” vision articulated by President Paul Kagame.

This situation contrasts with that in some other countries where institutional care has been allowed to proliferate. For example, in Kenya, the proportion of children who are orphans is substantially lower than in Uganda, and that has been the case at least since 1990. As in Rwanda, internal conflict, war, and AIDS have all served to increase the number of orphans in Uganda. Yet, even with Kenya’s lower proportion of orphans, a much higher proportion of Kenyan children live in institutions than do those in Uganda. In 1992, approximately 2,900 children were living in residential institutions in Uganda, about 0.03 percent of the country’s total child population. The number of children in such care was subsequently reduced through a family reunification program. In 1999, 35,000 children were reported to be living in Kenyan institutions, about 0.3 percent of the country’s total child population, ten times the proportion in Uganda.¹¹

Rwanda should take note of the different approaches to protecting vulnerable children taken by neighboring countries and apply the lessons at home. The government of Uganda has worked actively to reunite children in institutions with their parents or relatives, to ensure admissions are limited to children for whom such care is the only desirable option, and to close substandard institutions. In Kenya, however, institutional care has been allowed to proliferate out of proportion to any actual need for it.

The recommendations of the workshop highlighted the need for the Rwandan government to adopt and implement a comprehensive set of policies concerning children who lack adequate family care. They also pointed to the need to strengthen the capacity of the government to implement such policies.

Admissions procedures for centers are an important policy issue that must receive careful attention in Rwanda. The number of children in centers will not be reduced unless procedures are in place to ensure that the only children entering centers are those with no other more appropriate option. Action needed includes developing clear government policies and capacity building with local government officials and center directors who must implement those policies.

The resistance of some center directors and staff members is a major barrier to Rwanda's addressing appropriately and effectively the situation of children living in centers and helping them have an acceptable future as they reach adulthood. At least two-thirds of the children in centers have not had access to the option of foster care because the agencies arranging such care have been blocked from providing them this service, and an even larger proportion have not had access to the reintegration support that IRC is providing. IRC cannot do much about this situation, unless MINALOC establishes a clear policy regarding family reunification and reintegration and enforces that policy.

The team recognized that a very large number of children in Rwanda are likely to have been spontaneously fostered during or following the genocide, armed conflict, and population movements of 1994–96. Some tracing was done for surviving family members of such children by Save the Children Fund (UK) and the International Committee of the Red Cross, if someone came forward and requested it. However, no systematic attempt to identify such children and to carry out tracing on their behalf has ever been made. To do so would be beyond the capacity of the current IRC program. This issue is one the government can give attention to if it decides to develop policies concerning the care of vulnerable children.

Need for Collaboration

Organizations addressing the needs of especially vulnerable children appear to agree that no effective mechanism currently exists to facilitate information exchange or collaboration among relevant organizations and ministries. Each organization appears to have its individual area of geographic focus and, within those areas, organizations tend to concentrate on specific categories of children. The current fragmentation and isolation of organizations seem to reflect the failure of key actors to recognize the interrelationships among the phenomena of children in centers, child-headed households, and street children. As the numbers cited suggest, children continue to be made vulnerable by the mutually reinforcing plagues of genocide, war, poverty, and AIDS. The severity, magnitude, and intractability of these factors require a collaborative response among all current and potential actors, such as relevant ministries, local government, NGOs, international organizations, religious bodies, community groups, and donors. None of those actors has the resources and capacity to make a significant difference without the involvement of the others.

Rwanda badly needs to develop among all key actors a shared understanding of the interrelated causes of child vulnerability, consensus about priorities for action, and agreement about respective roles and responsibilities. Participants in the March 28–31, 2001, workshop on orphans, separated children, and appropriate responses for care and protection recommended a collaborative situation analysis as a first step toward building this kind of consensus and cooperative effort. A joint assessment could help create a shared understanding of the situation of children in Rwanda, relevant capacities, priority concerns, and the most effective approaches for addressing

both problems and opportunities. The findings of a collaborative situation analysis could provide a basis for stakeholders to plan how each could contribute toward and collaborate within a national plan to address the needs of the country's most vulnerable children.

In the design and implementation of all development programs in Rwanda, it is essential to temper assumptions that one might make about community solidarity in other contexts. Rwanda is a postgenocide society in which both survivors and perpetrators are living side by side. Approaches that have worked effectively in other countries in the region may not be appropriate in Rwanda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IRC Program—Reunification and Reintegration Component

Setting Priorities

1. Staff members responsible for tracing, reunification, and reintegration must give careful attention to setting priorities regarding the cases in which they invest their time. Children with the potential to benefit from tracing should have that opportunity. Except in a center slated to close or that employs firm screening criteria to prevent new admission of children as a poverty-coping mechanism, the project should generally avoid working to reintegrate children who are in the center for economic reasons.
2. IRC should encourage MINALOC to explore ways to monitor the reasons that children are entering and leaving centers. One step could be to include in the monthly report required from each center specification, by name, of every child admitted or discharged and the reason (e.g., admission—parental death, abandonment, economic distress; discharge—family reunification, foster placement, move to independent living, death).

Access to Centers

3. IRC should advocate with MINALOC to gain access to additional centers, where, in conjunction with the ministry, an initial step should be to determine the reasons each child is in the center.

Radio Announcements

4. IRC should make multiple radio tracing announcements, at least for selected cases.
Comment: Radio announcements have produced information that facilitated reunification in 10–20 percent of cases. The cost of repeated tracing announcements over a three-day period is only about US\$1.25 per case.

Reporting

5. In its reports on the tracing, reunification, and reintegration component of its program, IRC should include statistics on successful tracing and re-establishment of contact between a child and members of his or her immediate or extended family.

Economic Strengthening of Households

6. IRC staff should provide training in community participatory techniques to *all* its field-workers (social and economic outreach workers). Field-workers should also be trained to use the mobility maps and poverty assessment tool before they receive training in business-related areas. Subsequent business or income-generation training should be tailored to the specific needs of families whom IRC has determined should receive priority attention. IRC should not spend time on generic business-management or on agricultural-development training.
7. IRC should add to the poverty assessment tool social assets and membership in social networks or associations. Poverty assessments should be done only after families have completed mobility maps with social workers. Economic outreach workers should then meet with the social workers to discuss which information from the mobility map can be inserted into the poverty assessment tool.
8. IRC should spend most of its time on economic-strengthening efforts with families in the middle range (very poor, but not destitute). The Trickle Up training and grants should be the primary tools. IRC staff should identify potential activities that a household can engage in after it has gone through the Trickle Up process. Potential activities include initiating a community *tontine*, linking with a microfinance institution, or joining an association eligible for agribusiness assistance from Chemonics or ACDI/VOCA. *Comment: Families that are poor, but (1) have assets and social networks, (2) are already engaged in economic activities, and (3) have productive adults in the household, should receive minimal assistance from IRC staff. Linkages and referrals to additional programs (microfinance, agribusiness, and training activities) should be sufficient. This strategy will allow IRC to spend more time with families in poorer circumstances. Families that seem destitute but have adults who are still capable of being productive might benefit from the Trickle Up approach. The approach must be combined with strengthening the household's links to community and local government resources. Identifying organizations that can provide longer-term financial services (microfinance) and market linkages (agribusiness) is also important.*
9. Where tracing has been successful and the household identified wants reunification but is destitute and without productive capacity, IRC should work to strengthen the household's links to community safety nets (e.g., local government, associations, religious bodies, informal networks). *Comment: Focusing on income-generating activities where no productive capacity exists is not a wise investment of time and resources. It is the wrong tool for the job.*
10. IRC should form linkages and strategic alliances with organizations that specialize in microenterprise development, including microfinance and agribusiness development services. It should also seek to collaborate with community structures and organizations engaged in participatory community development. IRC should give particular attention to Social Development Committees and the *Nkundabana* (Friend of Children) networks that Save the Children Fund (UK) helped mobilize. *Comment: Nkundabanas are adult community members, chosen by child-headed households, who agree to monitor the situation of these children and inform the Social Development Committee when problems arise that cannot be solved within the cellule.*

11. IRC staff should confer with World Relief and CRS staff members to identify “sound practice” microfinance institutions. *Comment: These two organizations are leaders in Rwanda’s association of microfinance practitioners and can provide information on potentially effective partnerships that IRC can form.*
12. The IRC economic officer should join the Rwandan association of microfinance institutions as an honorary member. He should attend meetings when possible to learn, to share his experiences, and to ask advice about various economic-strengthening options from the membership. During meetings, he should advocate for and explain the importance of following sound microfinance practices.
13. IRC should confer with the USAID mission, with the agribusiness contracting agency—Chemonics—and with ACDI/VOCA on possibilities for creating linkages between IRC clients and programs that support agricultural opportunities.

IRC Program—Youth Component

14. IRC should discuss with ACDI/VOCA possibilities for collaboration regarding the youth program. IRC should investigate whether youth groups could become subcontractors responsible for labor-based rehabilitation of farm-to-market roads. IRC could also explore how ACDI/VOCA might be able to assist local government leaders in developing their sector-level revolving loan funds.
15. IRC should develop multiple approaches to helping youth develop economic opportunities for themselves. *Comment: Microfinance services can be appropriate for youth who are already involved in family businesses who or have previous experience in income-generating activities, but those without such exposure are not likely to be able to use such services effectively. Other alternatives include identifying mentoring possibilities within the private sector, using multiple entrepreneurial training approaches, promoting savings clubs (tontines), and linking vocational training with private-sector needs.*
16. IRC should contact Fiona Macaulay of “Making Cents” for information on Kinyarwanda training materials regarding Youth Entrepreneurship. Her e-mail address is <fiona@makingcents.org>. Other organizations that might be able to provide useful information include the Shootback Project in Kenya, which developed photography skills among youth in slum areas, and the International Youth Foundation, Youth Enterprise Services (YES). Contact the Mathare Youth Sports Association (254-2-583055 or <munro@form-net.com>) for information about the Shootback Project and Paul Sully at U.S. Peace Corps (<psully@peacecorps.gov>) for information about YES.
17. IRC should explore the feasibility, interest among youth, and potential value of supporting literacy and numeracy training and apprenticeships.
18. IRC should seek to involve youth as active promoters of HIV prevention among both peers and children younger than themselves. In addition to having youth disseminate information and advocate HIV prevention, the project should explore possibilities for them to provide direct assistance both to households affected by chronic adult illness and to orphans. *Comment: Such experiences can make AIDS and its effects concrete realities in*

the experience of youth. The process of helping others can generate a sense of empowerment among youth and a sense of hope, both of which are needed to counter the fatalism that undermines interest in adopting safe behaviors. As the program seeks to engage youth in these issues, logical, natural links may develop between the youth and unaccompanied minors component. For example, could youth be mobilized to meet some of the needs of child-headed households such as peer support or occasional child care?

19. IRC should facilitate communication links between Rwandan youth committees and counterpart groups in other countries in the region. *Comment: UNICEF, Implementing AIDS Prevention and Care Project (IMPACT), and DCOF are in a position to facilitate such contacts.*

IRC Staff Care

20. IRC should work with its staff members to prevent and respond to burn-out that may develop because of the stressful nature of their work. This program should include educating its staff members about the signs of burn-out, the psychosocial impact of this kind of work, and the steps that workers can take to care for themselves and their colleagues. *Comment: IRC's program has the potential to take a psychosocial toll on its staff. The case and community workers are closely involved in clients' stories of loss, separation, grief, and distress, which can result in vicarious traumatization. Further, many staff members are living with their own experiences of loss and distress because of the events of the past decade. In some cases, becoming involved in other people's similar experiences may make the management of their own experiences, thoughts, and feelings more difficult. The May 2000 UNAIDS publication, "Caring for Carers," provides relevant guidance.*^{12,13}

USAID

21. In consultation with the USAID mission, DCOF should explore ways that it could provide technical support to the development and implementation of the strategic plan developed at the March 28–31, 2001, MINALOC-IRC workshop. In particular, the IRC project, DCOF, and the USAID mission should participate with MINALOC and other actors in planning and implementing a collaborative situation analysis of the factors causing vulnerability among children in Rwanda. *Comment: For the strategic plan to be implemented effectively, some strengthening of MINALOC's capacity would be necessary. IRC has developed a working relationship with MINALOC that might allow it to play such a role.*
22. The USAID mission, with technical support from DCOF and in consultation with all stakeholders, should support development of mechanisms for regular information exchange on children's issues among relevant ministries (especially MINALOC, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Education), UNICEF, other United Nations bodies, and NGOs at national and subnational levels.

23. In communities or *quartiers* seriously affected by HIV/AIDS, the mission should explore possibilities for using food aid to support the most vulnerable households, especially child-headed households, those experiencing serious chronic illness, or those in which an adult has died within the last year.
24. USAID, with technical support from DCOF, should encourage the development of appropriate and cost-effective models of care that offer alternatives to institutional care for children without adequate family care. It should also encourage the Rwandan government to come to terms with the rapidly increasing need for adolescents now in centers to reintegrate into communities and live independently as they become young adults. *Comment: Alternative care might include, for example, foster care, local adoption, and small group homes integrated into communities. IRC is demonstrating effective approaches to community reintegration for adolescents in centers.*
25. DCOF should consider bringing all grantees in sub-Saharan Africa together for a workshop with the objectives of exchanging information on methodologies, increasing collaboration, and reducing isolation. *Comment: Commonly staff members of programs like the IRC program in Rwanda feel they are working in isolation from others doing similar work in other countries. Sharing experiences and lessons with staff members of other programs can help strengthen the programs. The IRC program has learned important lessons about tracing, reunification, and the use and adaptation of Participating Rural Appraisal/Participatory Learning and Action tools for tracing and reunification that other organizations could benefit from. Similarly, as IRC begins to tackle the issues of children vulnerable because of socioeconomic reasons or HIV/AIDS and street children more intensively, the staff members could likely benefit from the experience of other programs.*

APPENDIX A—SCOPE OF WORK

1. Review IRC's Unaccompanied Children (UAC) program, with special emphasis on
 - Overall project strategy
 - Community-based approach
 - Economic strategy and support component
 - Adolescents approach
2. Provide recommendations on best practices and future direction
 - Debrief senior staff on findings
 - Provide written recommendations
3. Rapidly review the impact of HIV/AIDS crisis on institutionalization of children
 - Present situation
 - Current community and agency responses
 - Future implications for centers and communities in Rwanda
 - Recommendations for future work in the area

APPENDIX B—SCHEDULE

	Morning	Afternoon	Other
Monday, March 19, 2001	8:00: Arrive and check into hotel. Review schedule and distribute documents. 10:30: Meet with USAID.	12:00: Have lunch. 1:00–5:00: Have HUAC overview.	Have free evening.
Tuesday, March 20, 2001	8:00–9:30: Review field-testing of family suitability and willingness tool with team leaders 9:30: Do fieldwork with mobility maps. (Break into three teams.)	Teams return to Kigali no later than 4:00. 5:00: Meet with Dr. Odette Nyiramilimo, State Secretary of Social Welfare.	Team finishes mobility map early to begin working on economic component of UAC program. Team discusses psychosocial issues surrounding UACs.
Wednesday, March 21, 2001	8:00–8:30: Have briefing on child-headed households (CHH) case. 9:30–10:30: Visit CHH case. 10:30–11:30: Visit local conseille.	11:30–12:00: Have briefing on adolescents. 12:00–1:30: Have lunch. 2:00–3:30: Meet with adolescents and local church members. 4:30–6:00: Meet with caseworkers to discuss community support.	Have dinner with UAC senior team and field-workers.
Thursday, March 22, 2001	Attend youth program.	Attend youth program.	Have free evening.

	Morning	Afternoon	Other
Friday, March 23, 2001	8:00: Meet with Heather Goldman and Maureen Capps (of CRS) on food security issues 11:00: Have over-view of ministry policy on children in centers.	2:00–4:00: Give informal feedback on UAC program to senior team 5:00: Meet with the First Lady.	
Saturday, March 24, 2001	Lynne departs. 10:30–12:00 Visit Red Cross alternative care program.	12:30–1:30: Visit Mariam’s Center. 1:30–2:30: Have lunch. 3:30–5:00: Attend focus group with people living with AIDS. 5:30: Tsegaye Chernet arrives.	Have dinner and debriefing with Tsegaye Chernet.
Sunday, March 25, 2001	8:00–11:00: Allow prep time for team (Mille Colline). 11:00: Travel to Rulindo.	2:00–3:30: Attend focus group with relatives who have children in center for socioeconomic reasons.	NGO perspective: Have dinner with International Social Service, ANS, and Save the Children (UK)
Monday, March 26, 2001	9:00–11:00: Have focus group with center directors.	2:00: Meet with PNLS. 3:00: Meet with UNICEF.	Meet with Ministry of Justice.
Tuesday March 27, 2001	Team prepares for the policy workshop.	10:00: Sayyid Bukenya arrives.	Have dinner with IRC director.
Wednesday, March 28, 2001	Attend workshop.	Attend workshop.	
Thursday, March 29, 2001	Attend workshop.	Attend workshop.	
Friday, March 30, 2001	Attend workshop.	Attend workshop.	
Saturday, March 31, 2001	Attend workshop.	Have debriefing with IRC.	

APPENDIX C—CONTACTS

Organization	Individuals	Contact Information
IRC	<p>Ms. Lizanne McBride, Country Director</p> <p>Ms. Brigitte DeLay, Chief Technical Advisor, Children’s Programs</p> <p>Mr. Mark Saalfeld, Deputy Director, Youth</p> <p>Mr. Alexander Krueger, consultant</p> <p>Mr. Jean Claude Demarais, Chief Technical Advisor, Community Development Programs</p>	<p>Tel: (250) 516175, 516176, or 513037</p> <p>irc@rwandatel1.rwanda1. com</p> <p>irc@rwanda1.com</p> <p>a.krueger@libero.it</p>
MINALOC	<p>Dr. Odette Nyiramilimo, State Secretary of Social Welfare</p> <p>Mr. Straton Nsanzaba- gawa, Director of Social Security and Protection of Vulnerable Groups</p>	<p>Tel: (250) 514185</p> <p>Tel: (250) 514410</p> <p>B.P. 3445 Kigali, Rwanda</p>
USAID	<p>Mr. Stephen Giddings, Program Officer</p> <p>Mr. Cristopher Barrat, Health Officer</p> <p>Ms. Heather Goldman, Regional Food Security Advisor</p>	<p>Tel: (250) 70940</p> <p>B.P. 2848 Kigali, Rwanda</p> <p>hgoldman@usaid.gov</p>

Organization	Individuals	Contact Information
UNICEF	Mr. Cyriaque Ngoboka Ms. Donata Garrasi, Project Officer, Child Protection	Tel: (250) 73033 or 78717 B.P. 381 Kigali, Rwanda cngoboka@unicef.org dgarrasi@unicef.org
Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, Government of Uganda	Mr. Sayyid Bukenya, Inspector of Children and Babies Homes	Tel: (256-41) 342942 P.O. Box 6019 Kampala, Uganda
PACT Ethiopia	Mr. Tsegaye Chernet, Co-Director	Tel: (251-1) 61 59 63 or 61 48 00 P.O. Box 30621 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tchernet@pacteth.org
International Social Service	Ms. Marie Noëlle Mottier	Tel: (250) 74051 B.P. 1337 Kigali, Rwanda ssi@rwandatel.rwanda1. com
	Ms. Juliana Kantengwa, Member of Parliament	B.P 352 Kigali, Rwanda jkm@rwandatel.rwanda1. com
Save the Children (UK)	Mr. Stephen Morgan, Program Director	Tel: (250) 72921 B.P. 2953 Kigali, Rwanda pdscfrwa@rwanda1.com
Family Health International	Ms. Deborah Murray, Resident Advisor	Tel: (250) 76193 or 70764 B.P. 3149 Kigali, Rwanda Dmurray@rwandatel1. rwandal.com
Handicap International	Mr. Gilican Mugabonake, psychosocial specialist	Tel: (250) 83689 B.P. 747 Kigali, Rwanda

Organization	Individuals	Contact Information
	Felix Muramutsa, consultant	Tel: (250) 8501528 B.P. 2449 Kigali, Rwanda muramutsa@hotmail.com
Catholic Relief Services	Ms. Maureen Capps	Tel: (250) 82109 or 82112 B.P. 65 Kigali, Rwanda crs1@rwanda1.com
Office of the United Nations High Commis- sioner for Refugees	Ms. Sarah Norton-Staal, Senior Regional Advisor, Children	nortons@unhcr.ch
National AIDS Control Program	Dr. Philippe Bandara, Executive Secretary	Tel: (250) 8522795

ENDNOTES

¹ John Williamson and Catherine Savino, *Rwanda Assessment: Displaced Children and Orphans Fund*, TUT Associates; U.S. Agency for International Development, Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research, February 1996.

² From IRC's program description, "IRC's Unaccompanied Children's Program—Bringing Children and Families Together."

³ Ray Wilkinson, "Life Is a Classroom, a Street without Guns and a Field without Mines," *Refugees*, vol. 1, no. 122, March 2001, p. 7.

⁴ Situation analysis of street children in Kigali carried out by Centre Carrefour.

⁵ Susan Hunter and John Williamson, *Children on the Brink 2000: Updated Estimates and Recommendations for Intervention*, U.S. Agency for International Development/The Synergy Project, July 2000.

⁶ The information on Rwanda's economic situation comes from USAID in-country documents.

⁷ Daniel Clay, Fidele Byriniro, Jaakko Kangasniemi, et al., *Promoting Food Security in Rwanda through Sustainable Agricultural Productivity: Meeting the Challenges of Population Pressure, Land Degradation, and Poverty*, Technical Paper no. 28, Bureau for Africa, USAID, August 1996, p. x.

⁸ For more detailed information on existing microfinance initiatives and their areas of operation, see the World Bank assessment on the microfinance industry in Rwanda. The report is currently in draft form; the final version is due out soon.

⁹ Previously, Save the Children Fund (UK) and the International Committee of the Red Cross implemented a major tracing program in Rwanda. Many NGOs also took part.

¹⁰ Statistics from IRC's second quarterly report and the United Nations Development Program state that 18 percent of Rwandans are between 15 and 24 years of age.

¹¹ Jill Donahue, Susan Hunter, Linda Sussman, and John Williamson, *Children Affected by HIV/AIDS in Kenya: An Overview of Issues and Action to Strengthen Community Care and Support: Report of a Combined USAID/UNICEF Assessment of Programming in Kenya for Children and Families Affected by HIV/AIDS*, USAID and UNICEF, 1999, p. 10.

¹² "UNAIDS Case Study," in *UNAIDS Best Practices Collection*, Geneva: UNAIDS, May 2000, <www.unaids.org/publications/documents/health/counselling/caring_carers.pdf>.

¹³ The team does not wish to suggest that the IRC program adhere to an approach to staff care that excessively reflects a trauma idiom. Trauma is socially and culturally constructed, and the Western concepts of vicarious traumatization may not be appropriate from the Rwandan context. However, experience does suggest that this kind of work may affect the well-being of the staff. Western strategies for coping with burn-out and vicarious traumatization and for staff care should be considered for use in culturally appropriate ways.